

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 HAMBUR 01298 181823Z

61

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FM AMCONSUL HAMBURG

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AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L HAMBURG 1298

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJ: DISSENSION WITHIN THE SPD IN SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN

REF: HAMBURG 218

1. DISSENSIONS CONTINUE TO PLAGUE THE SPD IN SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN. WITH ONLY SIX MONTHS TO GO BEFORE THE APRIL 1975 LANDTAG ELECTIONS THERE, THE CDU IS EXUDING CONFIDENCE WHILE THE SPD IS BEGINNING TO PROJECT THE IMAGE OF A PARTY VERY MUCH IN DISARRAY. AS WE REPORTED IN HAMBURG 0218, JOACHIM STEFFEN, SPD LAND CHAIRMAN AND A MEMBER OF HIS PARTY'S NATIONAL BOARD, HAS GRADUALLY LOST HIS HOLD OVER THE MORE MILITANT YOUNG ACTIVISTS IN HIS PARTY WHO, UNTIL THE AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT IN 1972 WHICH SERIOUSLY INCAPACITATED HIM, ACKNOWLEDGED, AND INDEED REVERED, HIS LEADERSHIP AS BOTH THE TITULAR HEAD OF THE SPD IN SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN AND HIS PARTY'S MOST INFLUENTIAL THEORETICIAN IN NORTHERN GERMANY. STEFFEN, WITH UNDISGUISED BITTERNESS DIRECTED AGAINST SOME OF HIS COLLEAGUES ON THE STATE

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PAGE 02 HAMBUR 01298 181823Z

PARTY BOARD, HAS NOW BEEN FORCED TO STEP ASIDE TO ALLOW

KLAUS MATTHIESEN, THE YOUNG SPD FLOOR LEADER IN THE STATE ASSEMBLY TO ACQUIRE CONTROL OF THE STATE-WIDE PARTY APPARATUS. MATTHIESEN HAS ALREADY BEEN SELECTED AS HIS PARTY'S CANDIDATE TO RUN AGAINST THE CDU INCUMBENT MINISTER PRESIDENT GERHARD STOLTENBERG IN THE SPRING ELECTIONS.

2. DEFECTIONS WITHIN SPD PARTY RANKS HAVE OCCURRED IN RECENT MONTHS IN LUBECK, PINNEBERG, ELSHORN AND WEDEL. DESPITE EFFORTS AT RECONCILIATION, THOSE MODERATE MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCILS WHO BOLTED THE PARTY AS A RESULT OF THEIR OPPOSITION TO THE INFILTRATION OF JUSOS INTO THE SPD STATE LEADERSHIP, HAVE NOT BEEN ENTICED BACK INTO THE PARTY RANKS EVEN WITH THE CHANGE IN NATIONAL LEADERSHIP FROM A JUSO TOLERANT WILLY BRANDT TO AN ANTI-RADICAL HELMUT SCHMIDT. WHILE THE TOTAL NUMBER OF SPD PARTY MEMBERS WHO HAVE FORMALLY RESIGNED FROM THE PARTY IN SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN PROBABLY DOES NOT EXCEED MORE THAN SEVERAL HUNDRED, THIS NUMBER, NEVERTHELESS, HAS BEEN SUFFICIENTLY LARGE TO TILT THE SCALES IN FAVOR OF THE CDU IN SEVERAL TOWN COUNCILS AND THEREBY SERIOUSLY WEAKEN THE OVERALL IMAGE OF THE SPD AT A TIME WHEN THE CDU IS OPTIMISTICALLY GIRDING ITSELF FOR THE LANDTAG ELECTION SIX MONTHS AWAY.

3. TWO NEW SCHISMS HAVE JUST DEVELOPED WHICH THREATEN TO FRAGMENT THE PARTY EVEN MORE AND FURTHER JEOPARDIZE ITS CHANCES OF TOPPLING THE CDU LAND GOVERNMENT. IN THE TOWN OF HEIST THE FORMER SPD MAYOR WITH 15 OUT OF A TOTAL OF 50 MEMBERS IN THE LOCAL PARTY CHAPTER TURNED IN THEIR MEMBERSHIP CARDS TO THE TOWN PARTY BOARD ON OCTOBER 12. INTER-PARTY FRICTIONS HAVE EXISTED IN HEIST SINCE THE COMMUNAL ELECTION OF MARCH 24, 1974 WHEN, BECAUSE OF THE FAILURE OF THE CONTROLLING RADICAL MEMBERS OF THE BOARD TO SUBMIT ITS PARTY LIST OF CANDIDATES ON TIME, THE SPD WAS DISQUALIFIED FROM PARTICIPATION IN THE LOCAL ELECTION, THEREBY FORFEITING THE ELECTION TO THE CDU OPPOSITION.

4. ANOTHER EVENT WHICH HAS FURTHER WEAKENED SPD PARTY UNITY OCCURRED IN LUBECK ON OCTOBER 16 WHEN PAUL BROMME, A FORMER DEPUTY MAYOR OF THE CITY, WAS FORMALLY OUSTED FROM THE LOCAL PARTY TOGETHER WITH HORST GOELDNER, PRESIDENT OF THE OFFICE OF THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH IN THE NORTH ELBE REGION. IN 1973 BROMME AND GOELDNER RESIGNED FROM THE SPD FACTION IN THE CITY COUNCIL FOR

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 HAMBUR 01298 181823Z

M AN INDEPENDENT BLOC WITHIN THE CITY LEGISLATURE IN OPPOSITION TO THEIR OWN PARTY WHICH, THEY CHARGED, WAS SLIPPING INTO THE RADICAL REACHES OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM. BOTH BROMME AND GOELDNER HAVE BEEN ANATHEMA TO THE LUBECK SPD PARTY LEADERSHIP SINCE THEN AND THEIR FORMAL EXPULSION FROM THE PARTY HAS CAUSED STILL ANOTHER FISSURE IN SPD UNITY IN SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN. FOR THEIR PART, HOWEVER, IT IS BROMME AND GOELDNER WHO HURL BACK THE CHARGE THAT THEY ARE THE DEFENDERS OF THE TRUE

SPD FAITH AGAINST THE APOSTASY OF THE CURRENT LUBECK SPD PARTY LEADERSHIP.

5. SIX MONTHS AGO SPD LEADERS WITH WHOM WE DISCUSSED THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN WERE CIRCUMSPECT ABOUT THEIR PARTY'S CHANCES IN THE APRIL 1975 LANDTAG ELECTION. GRADUALLY, HOWEVER, WITH THE SPREADING DISAFFECTIONS IN PARTY RANKS, THESE SAME LEADERS ARE NOW RELUCTANTLY ADMITTING THAT THE EROSION OF PARTY DISCIPLINE WILL ADVERSELY AFFECT THEIR CHANCES AT THE POLLS NEXT SPRING. WITH CONSIDERABLE PESSIMISM THE SPD PARTY CHAIRMAN IN HAMBURG ADMITTED TO US ON OCTOBER 15 THAT THE FRAGMENTATION OF HIS PARTY THROUGHOUT SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN IS PROBABLY IRREPARABLE AND THAT, THEREFORE, MATTHIESEN'S CHANCE OF DEFEATING STOLTENBERG IS BECOMING BLEAKER ALL THE TIME. BROGAN

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